

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

Please amend claim 1 as indicated among the following complete set of pending claims:

Claim 1. (Currently Amended) An apparatus for automatically locking shipping containers, comprising:

a housing having a seating surface on which a projection of an operating element is seated, a locking pin which is partially introduced into a sloped groove of a lower locker, and an insertion groove in which a spring and a ball are inserted;

the operating element being defined with a center opening and placed in the housing so that it can be moved upward and downward, the operating element having a tapered cut portion which is formed to allow the locking pin of the housing to extend into the center opening, an engagement groove in which a protrusion formed on an outer surface of the lower locker is engaged, and a shoulder which is to be brought into contact with a corner casting of a lower container;

an upper locker having an upper locking head which performs a locking function in a corner casting of an upper container, a rotating body which is defined with a receiving groove in which the ball inserted in the insertion groove of the housing can be received, and a stem portion which is integrally connected to the rotating body and around which a spring is placed, the upper locker passing through a center hole of the lower locker which is accommodated in the center opening of the operating element, to project beyond a lower end of the center hole; and

the lower locker having the center hole through which the upper locker passes, the protrusion which is engaged in the engagement groove of the operating element, a lower locking head which performs a locking function in the corner casting of the lower container, and the sloped groove in which the locking pin formed adjacent to a lower end of the housing is partially introduced to be guided therealong.